

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently amended) A method for screening a GABA_A receptor modulator for its potential as a sedative or anxiolytic, which method comprises the following steps:

- a) exposing the compound GABA_A receptor modulator to a test animal by administration; and
- b) measuring the effect of the compound GABA_A receptor modulator on the activity of the HPA axis;
- c) selecting the GABA_A receptor modulator as a sedative drug candidate if the compound substantially stimulates the HPA axis or selecting the GABA_A receptor modulator as an anxiolytic drug candidate if the compound has substantially no effect on the HPA axis.

2. (Original) The method according to claim 1, wherein the test animal is a mouse or a rat.

3. (Original) The method according to claim 2, wherein the measurement of the activity of the HPA axis is performed by measuring, in a blood sample from the test animal after administration, the level of plasma corticosterone and/or ACTH.

4. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 1, comprising the further step:

- c1) selecting the compound GABA_A receptor modulator as a sedative drug candidate if the compound substantially stimulates the HPA axis.

5. (Currently amended) The method according to claim 1, comprising the further step:

- c2) selecting the compound GABA_A receptor modulator as an anxiolytic drug candidate if the compound has substantially no effect on the HPA axis.

6. - 10. (Cancelled)